Candlewood Church



Overflow: Sermon Summary

TREASURE PRINCIPLE, Week 4 | Glenn Garvin | November 22, 2026

BIG IDEA: Money passes more easily through our hands when God directs it. When we have "extra," we learn how to stretch our joyful generosity muscles and watch God do miracles with it. We get to be a river, a pipeline, not a reservoir.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: "Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." **Proverbs 11:24-25 NLT**

When Too Much Is a Dangerous Dead End

California's Accidental Sea: The Salton Sea



- **A flood that went where it wasn't supposed to go.** In 1905, the Colorado River breached an irrigation canal meant to turn the Imperial Valley into farmland. For nearly two years it poured into a dry desert basin, creating a lake about 35 miles long. California's largest lake began as an accident: a flood of misdirected water.
- **The boom:** in the 1950s and 60s it was the "California Riviera," a resort destination that drew crowds for boating, fishing, and celebrities.

- **The problem:** the Salton Sea has no outlet. Water comes in, mostly as farm runoff, and leaves only by evaporation, so the salt stays behind. Today it's more than 50% saltier than the Pacific Ocean.
- **The decline:** in August 1999, about 7.6 million fish died in a single day.
- **The twist:** as it shrinks, the exposed lakebed blows dust carrying arsenic and selenium into nearby communities, contributing to asthma and lung disease.

What can't flow out doesn't just die. Eventually it hurts the neighbors.

Unlike its more famous cousin, the Dead Sea, where people float in water that's 34% salt (10 times saltier than the ocean), the Salton Sea is about 6% salt. It's not the salt; it's everything else. Almost no one swims in it anymore because of the chemicals and toxins.

The same Colorado River water that makes the Imperial Valley one of America's most productive farm regions is life-giving. Directed, it feeds the country. Trapped, it poisoned the air. **The difference isn't the water. It's whether it flows.**

Most of us aren't sitting on a sea of money, but we all have some "extra," some "overflow," coming in. The question is: where does it go?

Which Sea Are We to Be?



Are we the Sea of Galilee or the Salton Sea? In ancient days, Israel had its own version: the Sea of Galilee, which gives life because its water flows out, and the Dead Sea, which holds on to everything that comes in.

- **Everyone has inflow:** paychecks, bonuses, refunds, gifts, a little "extra" at the end of the month.
- **Everyone has an outlet, or doesn't.** Some of it flows out to people and purposes. Some of it just sits and slowly turns salty: worry, comparison, fear, and the feeling of "never enough."
- Pastor Larry closed with this idea last week: "Are we a river or a reservoir?"

Jesus told a story about a man who built his own Salton Sea, and found out, too late, how very dead it became.

Snapshot One: The Reservoir

Luke 12:16-20

> *"A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones...'"* **Luke 12:16-18 NLT**

A bumper crop is a good problem to have. But listen to how the man resolves it. Jesus tells the story in the third person, then lets us overhear the man's private thoughts, and they're full of pronouns.

- **In the Greek (verses 17-19)** he refers to himself 12 times: 8 "I" verbs (I will do, I have, I will gather, I will tear down, I will build, I will say) and 4 times "my" (my crops, my barns, my goods, my soul). Plus "himself" twice: he "reasoned within himself" (v. 17), and Jesus' summary in verse 21 describes someone who "stores up for himself."
- God doesn't interrupt his thinking until after all 12. He talks only to himself, about himself. He never mentions God, his workers, his family, or the poor.
- He's confident that storing it is the solution to his abundance, so his "extra" has nowhere to go. This isn't saving for a crisis, a downturn, or to help others; it's purely for his own security and pleasure.
- He even congratulates himself on his plan: "I'll sit back and say to myself, 'My friend, you have enough...'"

Then God cuts into the conversation. If this were a prayer, it would be going extremely well until God delivers the news about what will really happen to his abundance. The man calls himself a friend; God calls him a fool: "You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?" (Luke 12:20 NLT).

The manna principle

Jesus' story echoes a blessing that came with a warning: the manna in the wilderness. After the exodus from Egypt, God gave daily bread but told the Israelites to take only enough for their family for one day.

> *"But some of them didn't listen and kept some of it until morning. But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell."* **Exodus 16:20 NLT**

Paul brings up this manna principle in 2 Corinthians. The church had promised to collect money for the believers in Jerusalem, who were suffering in poverty, but the Corinthian churches hadn't finished what they started.

> *"Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving... Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal."* **2 Corinthians 8:11-14 NLT**

- Paul's emphasis is on their *prothumia*, the eagerness they showed when they first heard about the need. Their giving should match it, out of what they have, not what they don't have.

- **Paul was against guilt giving.** Giving shouldn't make things easy for someone else while making them hard for us. It should be equitable, a balanced reciprocity.

> *"As the Scriptures say, 'Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough.'"* **2 Corinthians 8:15 NLT**

Be excited about overflow giving, but not guilt-ridden when you just don't have it to give. **The manna principle is still true: hoarded extra blessing doesn't keep. It rots.** The rich fool didn't have a money problem; he had a financial flow problem.

Snapshot Two: The Leftovers

John 6:1-13

- A huge crowd follows Jesus to a hillside near the Sea of Galilee, close to Passover. Jesus turns to Philip: "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" John lets us in on the secret: "He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do" (John 6:5-6 NLT). In other words: what would you do?
- Philip sees a sea of people: 5,000 men, plus women and children; some estimate 15,000 or more. His estimate is 200 denarii, about eight months' wages, and it still wouldn't give everyone a bite. Today, feeding a sold-out Crypto.com Arena just one hot dog each would cost about a quarter of a million dollars; add a drink, and it's about half a million. Philip's math said it was hopeless.
- Andrew speaks up: "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" (John 6:8-9 NLT). The only one who came prepared was the boy who didn't sell his lunch.

The boy and his lunch

- Only John mentions the boy; Matthew, Mark, and Luke just say the disciples found five loaves and two fish.
- Only John says the loaves were **barley**, the poor family's grain. Revelation 6:6 shows the price gap: a day's wage bought one measure of wheat or three of barley. The "loaves" were small, flat rolls, more like pita.
- The fish were *opsarion* (G3795), "small fish," likely dried or salted, like sardines from the Sea of Galilee; the town of Magdala was known for preserving fish.

It was a poor kid's lunch: cheap bread and two little salted fish. He didn't give out of his abundance or his extra; he gave all he had. The lunch passed from the boy's hands to Jesus' hands. Jesus thanked God for it and passed it to the disciples, who passed it to thousands. Everyone ate as much as they wanted.

> *"After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, 'Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.' So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps..."* **John 6:12-13 NLT**

The boy didn't lose his lunch. He got to watch it feed the masses, and he got to exercise the generosity muscle God gave him.

Muscle vs. Pie



Many organizations, nonprofits, and individuals believe giving money away is like taking a slice out of a big, beautiful pumpkin pie: once it's gone, the pie is smaller.



But in the Kingdom of God, generosity, especially with our extra or overflow, works more like a muscle. The more it's exercised, stressed, and stretched, the stronger it becomes; the less it's used, the weaker it gets.

Be a River

> *"Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."* **Proverbs 11:24-25 NLT**

"God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving." **Randy Alcorn,** *The Treasure Principle*. (See Randy's six keys from The Treasure Principle at epm.org.)

Reflection: Letting Blessings Flow

Three ways overflow flows:

- **When God directs it:** a nudge to give to a specific person or need.
- **When we have "extra":** a bonus, a refund, a windfall, a paid-off bill. Before it pools, ask where it should flow.

- **When we simply want to stretch our generosity muscles:** giving beyond comfort, just to watch what God does.

Application

- **Take a generosity step.** Stretch your generosity muscle: one gift this week that's bigger or more spontaneous than feels comfortable. Then watch what God does with it.
- **Take a gratitude step.** Gratitude is the inflow; generosity is the outflow. A grateful heart with no outlet becomes a Salton Sea.

Dig Deeper: Where the Water Goes (Lake Tahoe and our sand-starved beaches)

Next week (Nov 29): the Magi and the 2027 missions vision. *Scripture quotations are from the NLT.*

SCRIPTURES

Luke 12:16-20 NLT ON SCREEN
Then he told them a story: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I'll sit back and say to myself, "My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!"' "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?'

Exodus 16:20 NLT ON SCREEN
But some of them didn't listen and kept some of it until morning. But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell.

2 Corinthians 8:11-14 NLT ON SCREEN
Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality. Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal.

2 Corinthians 8:15 NLT ON SCREEN
As the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough."

John 6:1-5a NLT ON SCREEN
After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around

him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him.

John 6:5b NLT ON SCREEN
Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?"

John 6:6 NLT ON SCREEN
"He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do."

John 6:8-9 NLT ON SCREEN
Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

John 6:11-13 NLT ON SCREEN
After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves**.**

Proverbs 11:24-25 ON SCREEN
Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.



DIG DEEPER NOTES



The Seas that died because of no outlet

1. The Salton Sea.

- **It began with misdirected water.** In 1905 an irrigation canal carrying Colorado River water broke, and the river poured into the desert basin for nearly two years. California's biggest lake started as a flood that went where it wasn't supposed to go.
- **It has no outlet.** Water leaves only by evaporation, and the salt stays behind. It's now more than 50% saltier than the Pacific.
- **It looked like a blessing for a while.** In the 1950s and 60s it was a resort destination. Then, with no outlet, it slowly turned toxic: in 1999 about 7.6 million fish died in a single day.
- **Now it's shrinking, and the exposed lakebed blows dust carrying arsenic and selenium.** That dust aggravates asthma and lung disease for the people living nearby. *What gets hoarded doesn't just die; eventually it hurts the neighbors.*

2. Lake Tahoe:

The Lake Tahoe community mood rises and falls with the lake level. *Ever notice how the whole town's mood rises and falls with the lake? Most of us do that with our bank accounts."*

3. Our Own Sand-starved beaches.

- **The cause:** University of California research says about two-thirds of the sand that used to reach the coast is now trapped on land. Dams hold the sediment back, and concrete flood channels carry the water out without it.
- **The cost:** communities now pay to haul sand back in. San Clemente is spending about $16 million to widen a half-mile of beach.
- **The timing:** this month's surf has made the loss visible to everyone.

Sources:

- California Legislative Analyst's Office: The Salton Sea, A Status Update
- WorldAtlas: The Year the Colorado Filled the Salton Sea by Accident
- FERN: As the Salton Sea shrinks, it leaves behind a toxic reminder
- University of California: Why California's beaches are shrinking
- Nature: Shoreline retreat and beach nourishment projected to increase in Southern California
- CSMonitor: As sand slips away, California beach towns dig in

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The young boy with the little barley cakes

John calls him a *paidarion* (Strong's G3808), a diminutive of *pais*, "child." It means something like "little boy" or "lad." Depending on context, it can describe anyone from a small child to a young teen, and sometimes a young servant boy. So he was young, probably not yet a man, and the text gives no age. Only John mentions the boy at all; Matthew, Mark and Luke just say the disciples found five loaves and two fish. Everything else you've heard in sermons (his mother packing his lunch, his name, his age) is tradition and imagination. That's fine as illustration, but label it.

Why "barley" matters: John is the only Gospel writer who says the loaves were **barley** (6:9).

- Barley was the **poor family's grain**. Wheat was the preferred bread; barley was cheaper and coarser, often considered food for animals and the poor. Revelation 6:6 shows the price gap: a day's wage buys one measure of wheat or three of barley.
- The "loaves" were small, flat rolls, more like a pita than a loaf of sandwich bread. Five of them would make a light meal for one hungry boy.

The fish: John uses *opsarion* (G3795), "**small fish**," a diminutive again. These were likely dried or salted, something like sardines from the Sea of Galilee, eaten as a little side dish with the bread. The fishing town of Magdala was known for salting and preserving fish.
So the whole lunch was a **poor kid's lunch: cheap bread and two little salted fish.** It wasn't much to begin with, and Andrew's response says it all: "But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

The Word Study: *perisseuō*, "Overflow"

- **perisseuō** (G4052) means to overflow, to be left over, to abound. **perisseuma** (G4051) is the surplus, the "extra."
- The same word family shows up in nearly every key text this week (observation; worth showing on a slide):
    - **Luke 12:15**, just before the rich fool: life is not measured by *perisseuō*, "abundance."
    - **John 6:12-13**: the "leftovers" (*perisseuō*) that filled twelve baskets.
    - **2 Corinthians 8:14**: "your plenty" is *perisseuma*: your overflow, your extra, can supply what others need.
    - **2 Corinthians 8:2**: the Macedonians' "overflowing joy" is *perisseia*.
- **The point:** the same "overflow" can be stored in barns or gathered into baskets. **One rots; one feeds people**. **The extra is the same; the direction is different.**

Randy Alcorn's six keys from the Treasure Principle

1. "God owns everything; I'm His money manager."
2. "My heart always goes where I put God's money."
3. "Heaven, the New Earth, not the present one, is my home."
4. "I should live today not for the dot, but for the line."
5. "Giving is the only antidote to materialism."
6. "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."